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AN ATLAS
of the
LIFE of CHRIST



John F. Stirling

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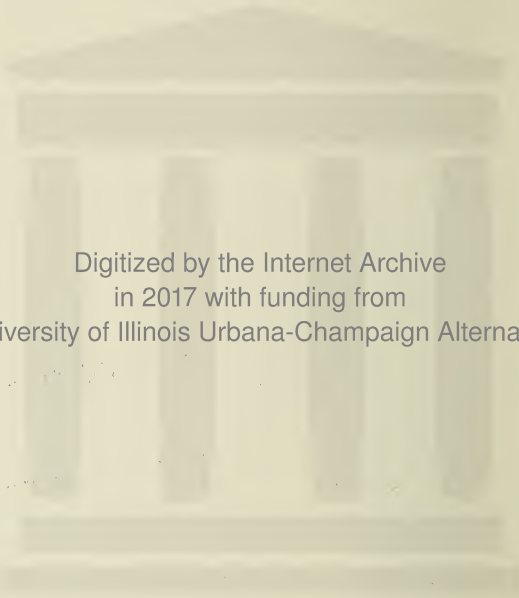
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AN ATLAS
OF THE
LIFE OF CHRIST

By
Rev. JOHN F. STIRLING

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PREFACE

THE design of the work is to give a simple, clear and connected outline of the Life of Christ. It is attempted in a series of maps, on which, as far as possible, His journeys are traced, and the different incidents of His ministry are marked at the places where they occurred. Much of the chronology, and many of the historical and geographical relations of His Life must, unfortunately, ever remain matters of conjecture, but attempts will always be made to fix these and form them into a connected whole, and the present work only claims to take the results that scholarship has reached, and present them in the clearest and simplest manner. In a work of this aim and compass it is impossible to give the various views on the many undetermined points, but no position has been taken up without careful consideration of the best authorities. For convenience, the history has been divided into the broad seasons of the year, and only the essential geographical features have been shown on the maps. A few notes have been added, in the hope that they may picture the country and portray the people that environed His Life.

(iii.)

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
TITLE PAGE	I.
PREFACE	III.
CONTENTS	IV.
DATE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH ; HISTORICAL NOTE	V.
DISTANCE MAP OF PALESTINE	1
PHYSICAL MAP OF PALESTINE	2
GENERAL MAP OF PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF CHRIST	3
NOTES ON PART I.—BIRTH TO BEGINNING OF MINISTRY	4
PART I.—BIRTHPLACE, 5 B.C.	5
,, HOME, 4 B.C.—27 A.D.	6
,, BEGINNING OF MINISTRY, 27 A.D.	7
NOTES ON PART II.—JUDÆAN MINISTRY	8
PART II.—JUDÆAN MINISTRY, SPRING, 27 A.D.	9
,, ,, ,, SUMMER AND AUTUMN, 27 A.D.	10
,, ,, ,, WINTER, 27—28 A.D.	11
NOTES ON PART III.—GALILEAN MINISTRY	12
PART III.—GALILEAN MINISTRY, SPRING, 28 A.D.	13
,, ,, ,, SUMMER, 28 A.D.	14
,, ,, ,, AUTUMN, 28 A.D.	15
,, ,, ,, WINTER, 28—29 A.D.	16
,, ,, ,, SPRING, 29 A.D.	17
,, ,, ,, SUMMER, 29 A.D.	18
,, ,, ,, AUTUMN, 29 A.D.	19
NOTES ON PART IV.—PERÆAN MINISTRY	20
PART IV.—PERÆAN MINISTRY, WINTER, 29 A.D., 1st STAGE	21
,, ,, ,, ,, ,, 2nd STAGE	22
,, ,, ,, ,, 29—30 A.D., 3rd STAGE	23
NOTES ON PART V.—DEATH AND RESURRECTION	24
PART V.—THE PASSION, SPRING, 30 A.D.	25-26
,, THE RESURRECTION, SPRING, 30 A.D.	27

DATE OF CHRIST'S BIRTH.

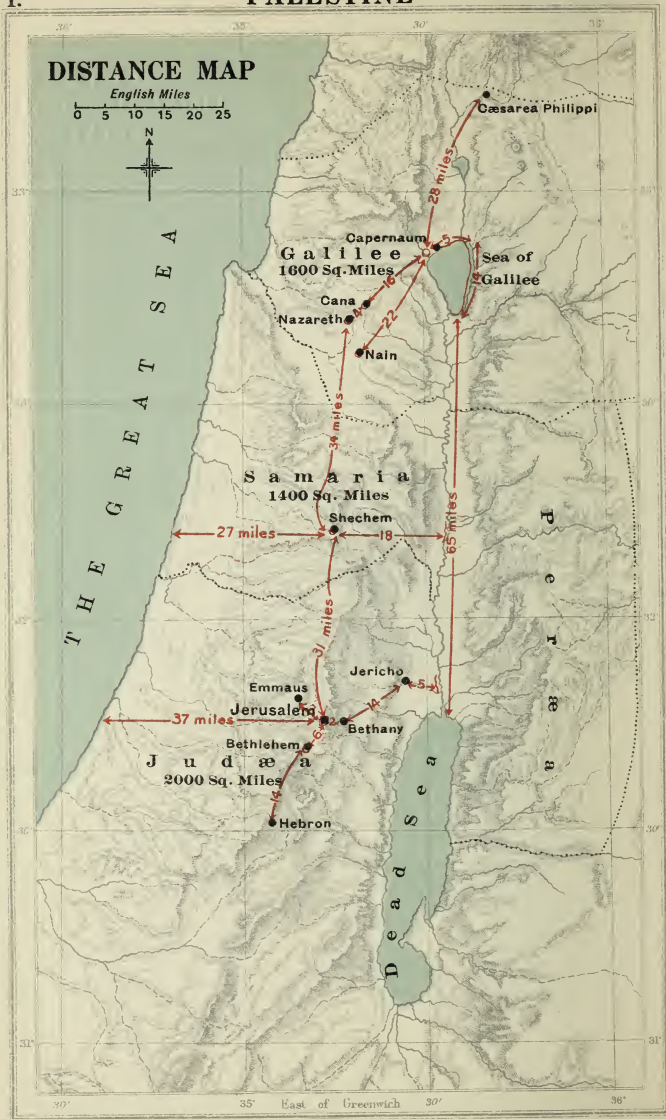
The birth of Christ is not placed at the beginning of the Christian era, because later study of history proved that the actual year of his birth was earlier than that assumed by the first compilers of our calendar. The exact date cannot be fixed, but it was prior to the death of Herod in the Spring of 4 B.C. The Judæan census, during which Christ was born, was appointed for the year 8 B.C., but political troubles delayed it until probably 5 B.C.

HISTORICAL NOTE.

At the time of Christ Palestine was part of the Roman Empire, governed by the sons of Herod. Archelaus ruled Judæa and Samaria until 6 A.D., when he was deposed and banished, because of his severity and cruelty; and Judæa was placed under a succession of Syrian governors; Galilee and Peræa were under the authority of Antipas, who possessed his father's fondness for building towns, but lacked strength in government. The Roman rule was not popular, and during the earlier years of Christ's life, Judas the Galilean, headed a revolt against the foreign yoke. He was a Pharisee, and, like his class, held strongly the theocratic view, and gave a political interpretation to the Messianic hope. The movement was defeated, but the ideas permeated the masses of the people, and intensified until they issued in the final struggle with the Roman domination a few years after the death of Christ. If the attitude of the Sadducees seemed more favourable to the Empire, it was only that they might win the favour of the princes to secure to them the monopoly of their office.

Religiously the country was divided by antagonistic parties that were spiritually low. The Pharisees had reduced religion to the mere performance of prescribed rites. The main purpose of their Scribes was to give scholastic interpretations of Scripture and exact instructions for every detail of life. The Sadducees were the party of protest. They were an exclusive class, belonging mainly to the aristocracy. They rejected the traditions of the Scribes, ignored the Messianic hope, and denied the resurrection. Sceptical of spiritual influences, they directed their attention to material interests.

PALESTINE



PHYSICAL MAP

English Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25



T H E G R E A T S E A

M a r i t i m e P l a i n

M t s . o f J u d æ a

W i l d e r n e s s o f J u d æ a

D e a d S e a
1291 feet below Sea-Level

J o r d a n

A r a b i a n D e s e r t

L e b a n o n

Sidon

Tyre

Capernaum

Nazareth

Samaria

Shechem

Mt. Gerizim

Jerusalem

Bethlehem

Mt. Ebal

Mt. of Olives

Pisgah

Sea of Galilee
-682

Damascus
Mt. Hermon
9150

Abana

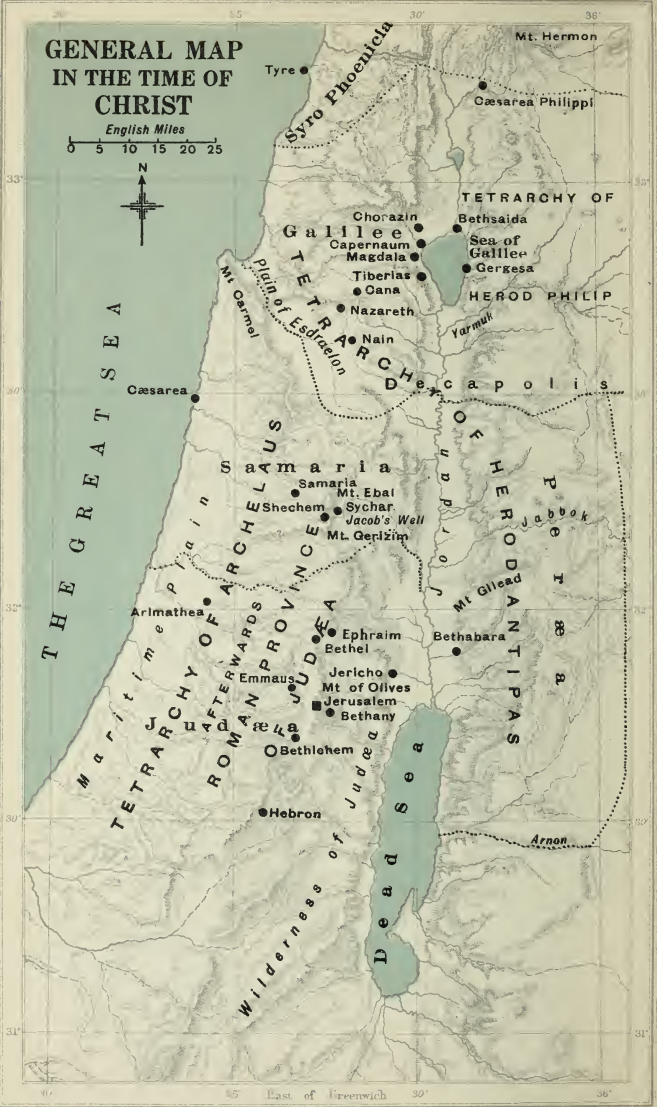
Cæsarea Philippi



PALESTINE

GENERAL MAP IN THE TIME OF CHRIST

English Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25



15 East of Greenwich 30'

PART I.

Birth to Beginning of Ministry.

5 B.C.—27 A.D.

BETHLEHEM

The town is shut in on almost every side by the high barren mountains of Judæa, but its site is one of the most beautiful in the whole province. It occupies a hill that is green with avenues of oaks, gardens of olives and grapes, orchards and cornfields, and is connected to Jerusalem by a valley of groves and vineyards. On the south-east of the town, hewn out of the limestone rock, is the cave which tradition preserves as the birthplace of our Lord.

JERUSALEM

The Holy City is distinguished by its whiteness, its isolation, and its security. It is an imposing mass of walls and buildings without a touch of colour, but with a style of architecture which gives it an appearance of magnificence, that is rendered more impressive through being wrought out in grey stone. In the sunlight it glistens like a jewel. It is a solitary city; the only sign of life in an empty and monotonous country. No highways come near. It is alone on the desert hills. Its safety is secured on the east, west and south by a deep gorge, and on the north by a barrier of hills. Its approach is difficult, and the absence of water in the surrounding neighbourhood made invasion almost impossible.

NAZARETH

A quiet little town, concealed in the hollow of the hills, at the head of the broad, busy Plain of Esdraelon. It held a unique position, for it secured complete seclusion with close proximity to the world. It nestled amongst the hills, hidden and unknown, but from the ridge that screened it, there stretched a wide expanse of country, which was crossed by the principal thoroughfares of the world, and was famous for its associations with the battles of sacred history. The town itself was a group of shabbily-built stone huts on the western side of the enclosed basin, presenting the poverty-stricken appearance of an eastern village, but sheltering a people pleasant and cheerful.

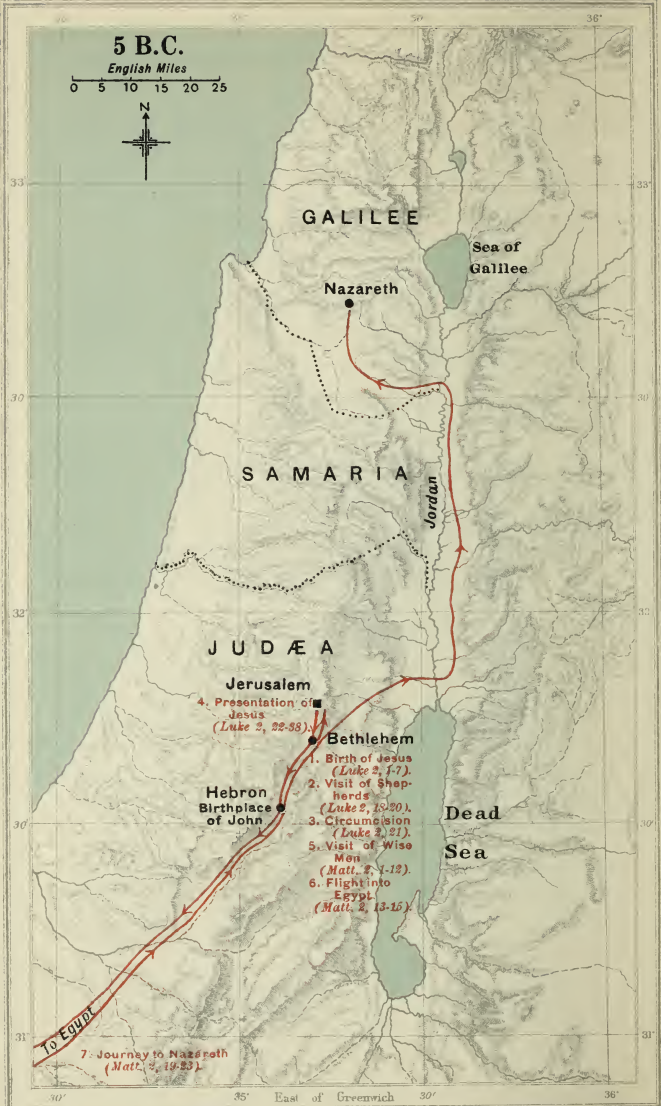
BETHABARA

The place of our Lord's baptism cannot with certainty be determined. Most probably it was on the lower Jordan, at a ford easily accessible to the people of Judæa. It is generally identified with Bethabara, but every ford in the river has, in turn, been claimed as this site.

CANA

A pretty village built in terraces, amidst gardens and groves, on the western side of a hill, with a river valley bordering it on the south. It is on the direct route from Nazareth to the Lake of Galilee.

PART I. BIRTH.



4 B.C. TO 27 A.D.

English Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25



GALILEE

Sea of Galilee

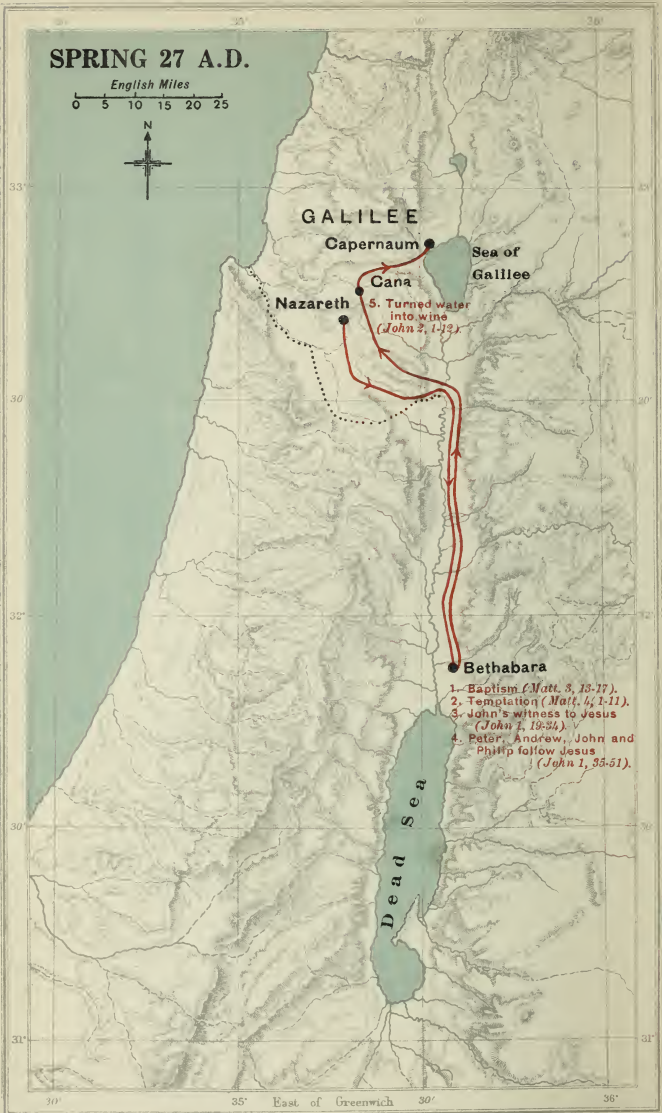
Nazareth

- 1. Home of Jesus
(Luke 2, 39-40).
- 2. Visit to Jerusalem 8 A.D.
(Luke 2, 41-52).

Jerusalem
1st Passover:
Jesus in Temple
(Luke 2, 41-52).

Dead Sea

30° 35' West of Greenwich



PART II.

Judæan Ministry.

27 A.D.

JUDÆA

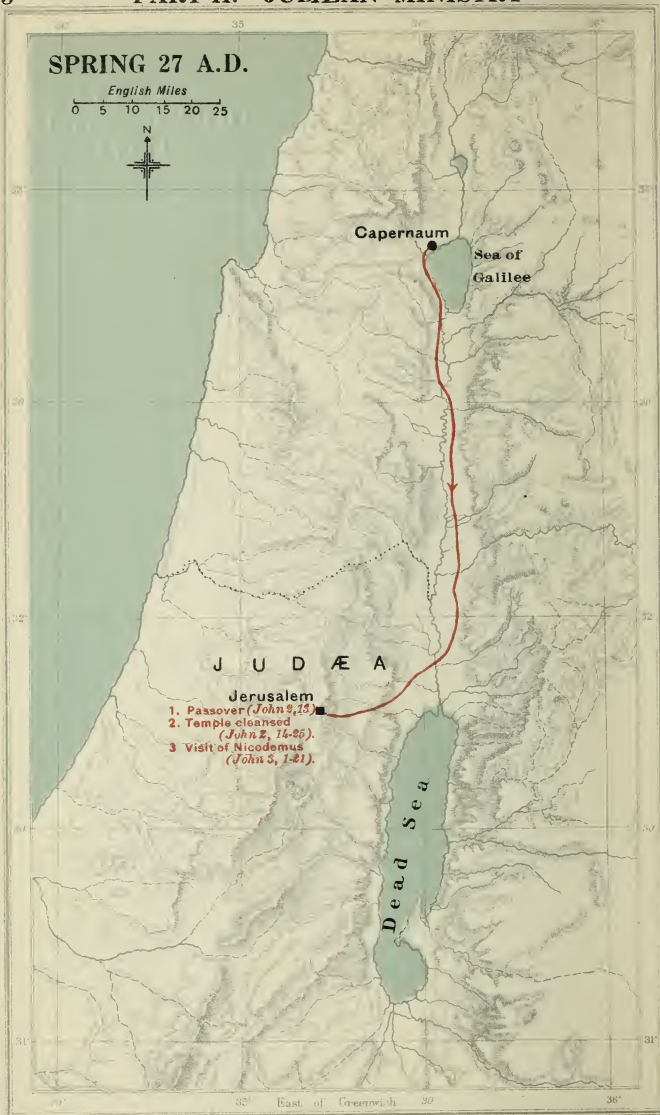
The Country.—The province is described as the hill country, but the hills have no bold or striking outline, and are so closely packed together that their flattened and barren summits form, between the Maritime Plain and the Jordan Valley, a broad and desolate tableland, more than half of which is bare grey rock. With the exception of the uplands in the neighbourhood of Bethany, Bethlehem and Hebron, the land has no beauty. There are no open plains or valleys. Here and there a deep ravine breaks the rolling outline of the hills, but otherwise it is a monotonous stretch of desert, without variety of form or colour. There are a few trees and shrubs, but they are starved and stunted, for there are no perennial streams, and the soil is parched and poor. The grass is thin, and in the Spring is sprinkled with the brilliant colours of the wild mountain flowers, but as a whole the land is barren and dreary. Even the towns and villages seem from a distance like “a mere outcrop of the rock.” In the centre of this silent and severe country, shouldered on the bare hills, is the lonely tableland which bears the City of God.

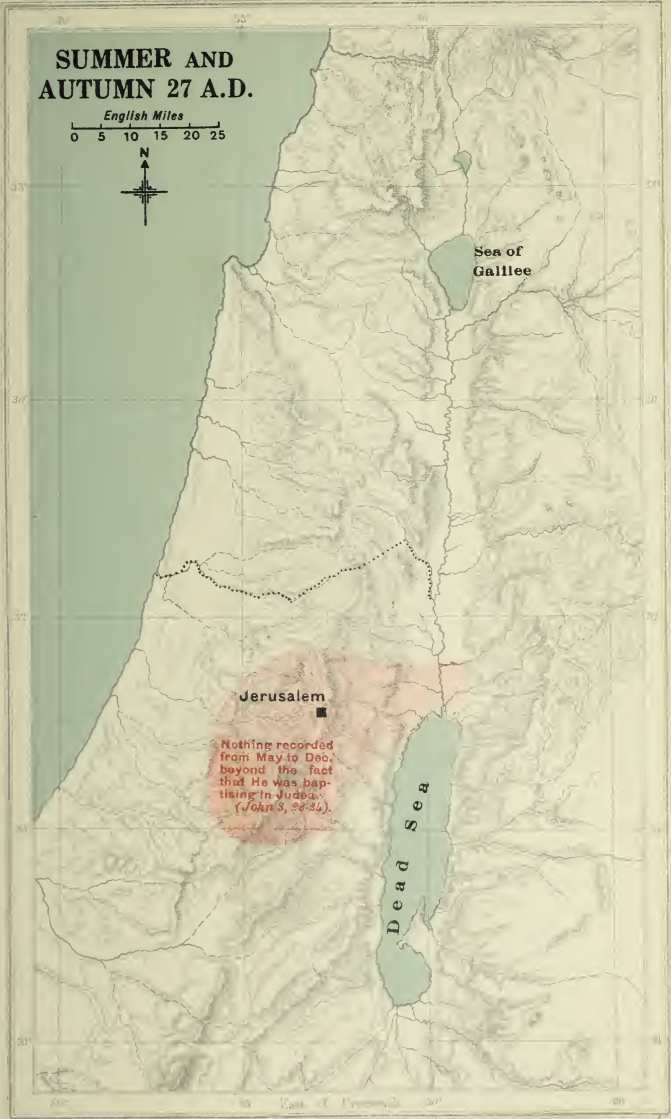
The People.—They had all the severe elements of their country. They were exclusive and conservative, hard to influence and slow to move. They were lacking in imagination and initiative, but possessed the stolid character which kept them, through their chequered history, faithful to their traditions. They were proud and pedantic, given to petty disputations and the scrupulous observance of the letter of the law.

SAMARIA

The Country.—Compared with Judæa this country is open and fertile. It is mountainous, but the hills are not so closely-set or so barren as those of the south. They are loosely scattered about the province in groups, and many of them are covered to their summits with pasture and trees. Plains and valleys break up the country, and although they are not as large or as numerous as those of Galilee, they are watered by full streams and rivers, and are notable for their abundant crops. Amongst the mountain groups there are wild picturesque glens, but generally, Samaria is a land of bold hills and fertile valleys. Rising in the centre of the province are the twin heights of Ebal and Gerizim, the one on the right and the other on the left of the main road from Jerusalem to Nazareth. Upon the latter, standing amidst palm trees, is the ancient city of Shechem, which rivalled Jerusalem as the centre of patriotism and worship. Sychar lies at the base of Ebal, at the opening of a wide valley, and half a mile south, by the side of the great road, is Jacob's Well.

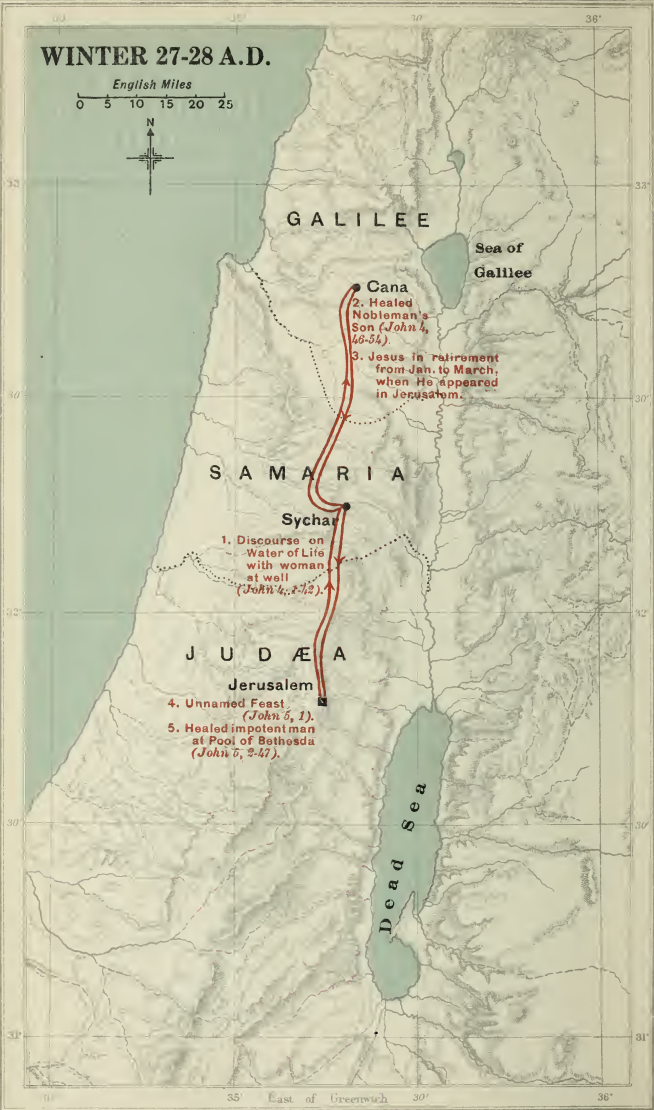
The People.—They were reputed to be a community of malcontents, with bitter feelings of hatred and revenge, but they were not without generous expressions of gratitude and brotherhood. They prided themselves on their independence of thought, but lacked concentration and self-control. Superstitious and pleasure-loving, they easily fell into the idolatrous worship and loose habits of the heathen nations.





WINTER 27-28 A.D.

English Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25



GALILEE

Sea of Galilee

Cana
2. Healed Nobleman's Son (*John 4, 46-54*).

3. Jesus in retirement from Jan. to March, when He appeared in Jerusalem.

SAMARIA

Sychar

1. Discourse on Water of Life with woman at well (*John 4, 1-12*).

JUDEA

Jerusalem

4. Unnamed Feast (*John 6, 1*).

5. Healed impotent man at Pool of Bethesda (*John 6, 2-47*).

Dead Sea

35' East of Greenwich 30'

36'

PART III.

Galilean Ministry.

28—29 A.D.

GALILEE

The Country.—The land is renowned for its variety and beauty. There are rugged snow-capped mountains with deep chasms and charming glens; gentle swelling hills with trees and shrubs shading their green slopes; cultivated terraces of vineyards and olive groves; rich stretches of cornfields and park-like meadow-lands; tiny springs and rivulets falling from rocks and terraces; rushing rivers fertilizing verdant valleys; birds and flowers that belong to all climes. From Mount Carmel it lies like a terraced garden rising in tiers of hills, from the Plain of Esdraelon to the lofty heights of Lebanon and Hermon. Over it, like a network of veins pulsating with life, were the great highways of the world with their streams of heathen civilization. On its plains and hills were numerous towns and villages, with busy industries and well-tilled farms. It was a populous country filled with prosperity and gaiety. Beneath it burned smouldering volcanic fires.

The People.—The Galileans were open-minded and kind-hearted, with noble and generous impulses. Through contact with the foreign nations that invaded the province, they had a broader outlook and a more versatile character than the people of Judæa. They were attracted by innovations, but had a high standard of virtue and honour, and preserved zealously their religious and patriotic ideals. Like their country, their nature held hidden fires of passion.

THE LAKE OF GALILEE

The centre of activity in the province was the Lake of Galilee, which lay under a tropical heat, at the bottom of a deep mountain valley. The shore on the east was barren and empty, and darkened by an overshadowing range of hills. On the west the hills were rounded and grass-covered, with towns and villages thickly clustered on their slopes. Every available strip of land was cultivated, and nowhere in the country was there such a profusion of vegetation. The towns that lined the shore were flourishing centres of industry and commerce, and the narrow ribbon of coast was thronged with people of all nationalities, pursuing every manner of trade and pleasure. Dotted about on the blue waters of the lake were thousands of white sails. It was a region of fertility and prosperity, with the ceaseless movement of an abundant and active life.

Capernaum.—Nothing remains of this old town to indicate its position, which was possibly on the north-west of the lake. It was a busy port, the first of importance on the great road from Damascus, with a garrison, a market, and a number of growing industries.

Nain.—Probably a large walled town on the north side of the rugged ridge of Little Hermon.

Gergesa.—A town at the mouth of one of the rivers which flow into the lake on the east. Rising directly above it, and almost overhanging the water, are desert mountains with tombs hewn in the rock.

Bethsaida.—A city at the head of the lake, and near the mouth of the Jordan. It stood on the lower slope of a hill and overlooked a rich plain that was sheltered by the mountains.

Gennesaret.—A crescent-shaped plain towards the north-west of the lake, about four miles long and not more than a mile broad. It was one of the garden spots of the world.

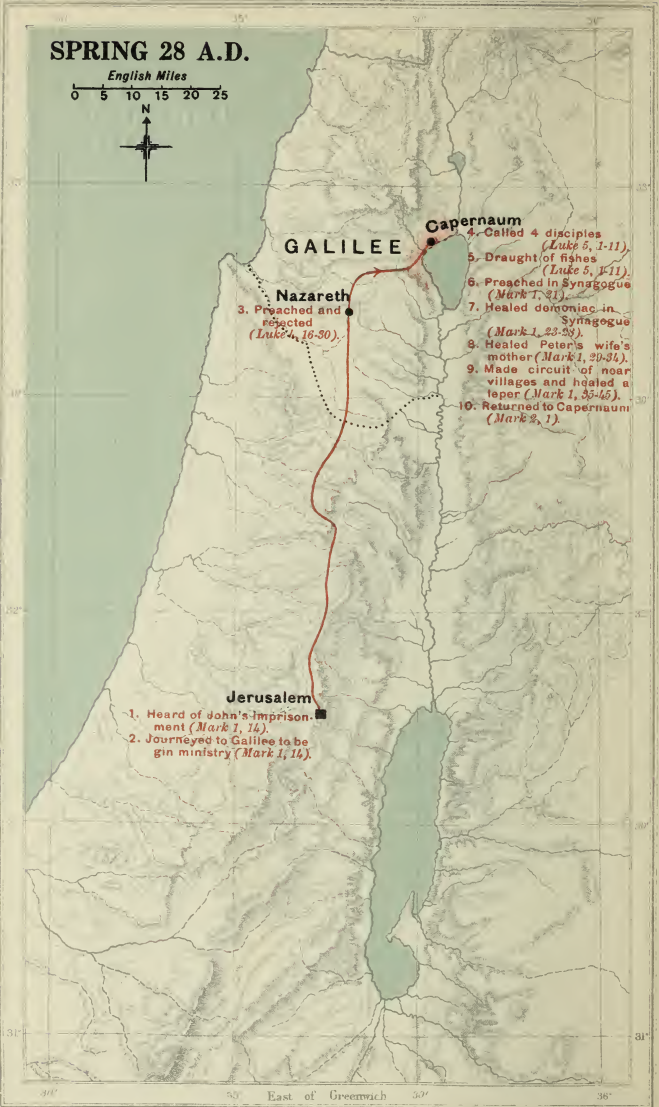
Tyre and Sidon.—Two great commercial cities of Phœnicia. The eastern boundary of the province was studded with heathen towns and villages.

Cæsarea Philippi.—An ancient city on a site noted for its natural grandeur and beauty. Rivers, cascades and fountains made the place 'a sanctuary of waters.' There was a temple to Pan, and one of white marble built by Herod to the honour of Augustus.

SPRING 28 A.D.

English Miles

0 5 10 15 20 25



GALILEE

Capernaum

Nazareth

3. Preached and rejected
(*Luke 4, 16-30*).

4. Called 4 disciples
(*Luke 5, 1-11*).

5. Draught of fishes
(*Luke 5, 1-11*).

6. Preached in Synagogue
(*Mark 1, 21*).

7. Healed demoniac in Synagogue
(*Mark 1, 23-26*).

8. Healed Peter's wife's mother
(*Mark 1, 29-31*).

9. Made circuit of near villages and healed a leper
(*Mark 1, 35-45*).

10. Returned to Capernaum
(*Mark 2, 1*).

Jerusalem

1. Heard of John's imprisonment
(*Mark 1, 14*).

2. Journeyed to Galilee to begin ministry
(*Mark 1, 14*).

East of Greenwich

SUMMER 28 A.D.

English Miles
0 5 10 15 20 25



GALILEE

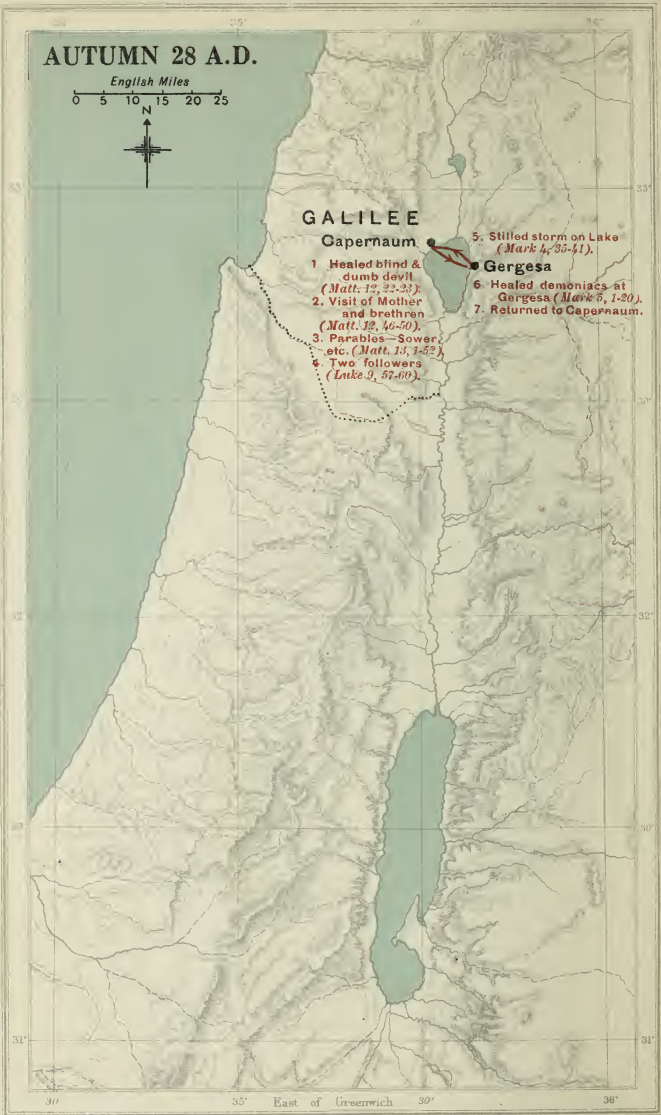
Capernaum

Nain

Made a circuit of
Nain and other
cities.

9. Raised widow's son
at Nain.....
(Luke 7, 11-17).
10. Baptist's message
from prison
(Luke 7, 18-35).
11. Dined with Simon
and anointed by
woman
(Luke 7, 36-50).
12. Preached in cities
(Luke 8, 1-3).
13. Returned to
Capernaum.

1. Healed paralytic
(Mark 2, 1-12).
2. Called Levi
(Mark 2, 13-17).
3. Plucked corn
(Mark 2, 23-28).
4. Healed withered
hand in Synagogue
(Mark 3, 1-6).
5. Spent night in prayer
(Mark 3, 7-12).
6. Chose disciples
(Mark 3, 13-19).
7. Sermon on Mount
(Matt. 5, 1 to 7, 28).
8. Healed centurion's
servant
(Matt. 8, 5-13).



WINTER 28-29 A.D.

English Miles

0 5 10 15 20 25



Nazareth

Capernaum

1. Raised Jairus' daughter
(*Matt. 9, 18-26*).
2. Healed impotent woman
(*Matt. 9, 20-22*).
3. Healed two blind men
(*Matt. 9, 27-31*).
4. Healed dumb devil
(*Matt. 9, 32-34*).

Made a circuit of
Nazareth, etc.

5. Again rejected at
Nazareth (*Mark 6, 1-6*).
6. Sent out twelve apostles
(*Mark 6, 6-13*).
7. Heard of John's death
(*Mark 6, 14-29*).
8. Returned to Capernaum.

East of Tyberich

SPRING 29 A.D.

English Miles

0 5 10 15 20 25



GALILEE

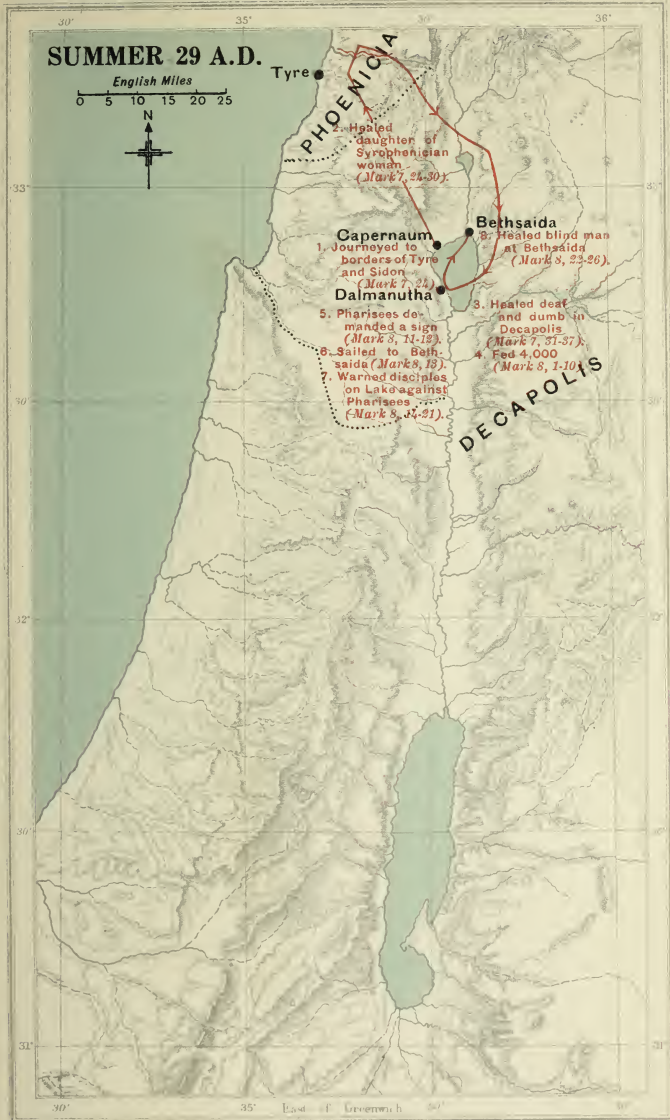
Capernaum
Gennesaret

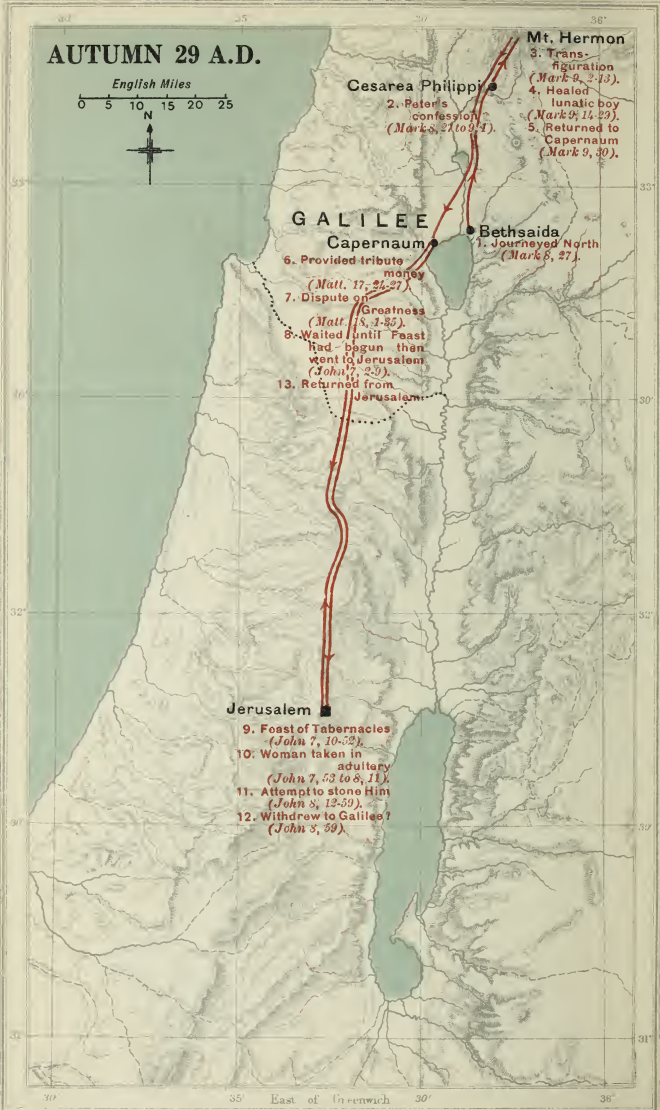
Bethsaida

1. Return of apostles
(Mark 6, 30)
2. Crossed the Lake
(Mark 6, 31-32).
3. Fed 5,000
(Mark 6, 34-44).
4. Walked on Sea to disciples
(Mark 6, 45-52).
5. Landed at Gennesaret. Healed sick
(Mark 6, 53-56).
6. Returned to Capernaum.
7. Discourse in Synagogue on Bread of Life
(John 6, 22-71).
8. Disciples eat with unwashed hands
(Mark 7, 1-23).

30° East of Greenwich 30°

36°





PART IV.

Peræan Ministry.

29—30 A.D.

PERÆA

The Country.—Rising from the jungle of the Jordan, and stretching along the eastern boundary of the Promised Land, is an undulating line of hills. For the most part the northern range is densely wooded with forests of pine and oak, which extend far down the mountain side. The southern section is a waving tableland of rich pasture, with widening tracts of desert as it falls toward the Dead Sea. It is the pastoral province of Palestine, distinguished from the others by the multitude of flocks and herds, that wander over its hills, and give to it the atmosphere of leisured freedom, that belongs to rural life. Compared with the country on the west of Jordan, it is promising, but undeveloped. From the time it was first entered by the patriarchs, it was the refuge of the exile, partly because of its isolation, and the unfettered life of the nomad tribes that pitched their tents on its slopes, and partly, perhaps, because from the solitudes of its mountain heights, there opened wide extensive views into the heart of the Holy Land.

The People—From the first the land was given to the pastoral tribes of Gad and Reuben, and they have never emerged from the state of their ancestors. To this day they dwell in tents, and follow the free and simple life of a primitive civilization. The northern mountain tribe was wild and warlike, ready to plunder or send valiant men to join an outlaw band. The southern tribe joined in none of the great struggles of the nation. Its people preferred to sit by the pleasant streams listening to the lowing of the cattle, or talking of the increase of their flocks.

THE JORDAN VALLEY

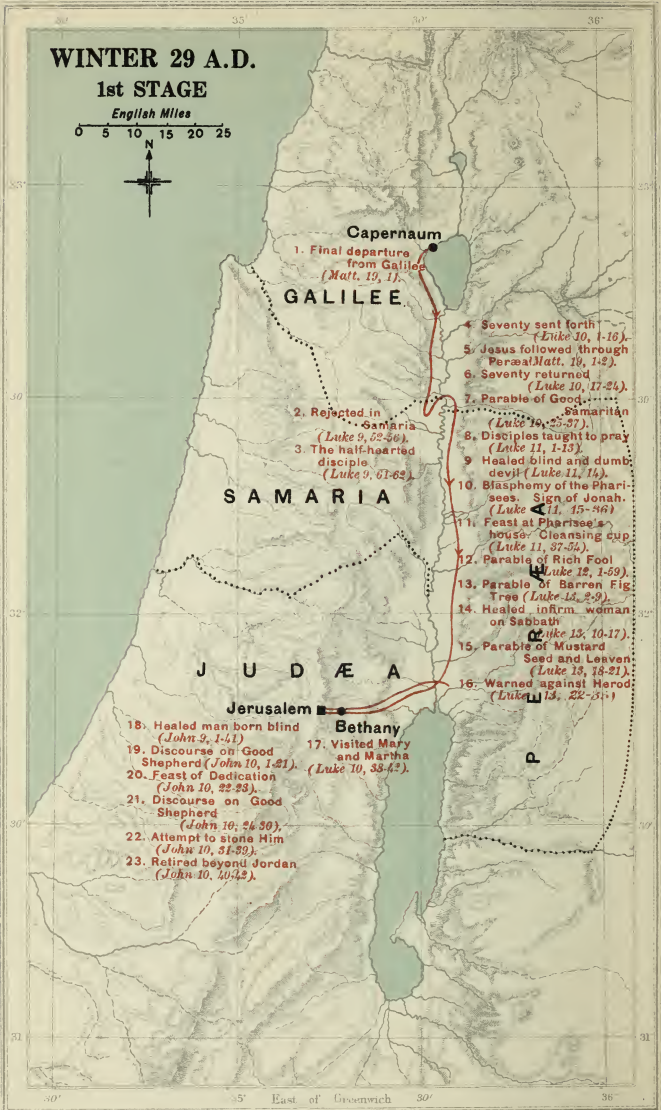
The river leaves the Lake of Galilee with a sharp descent, and rushes down a steep and winding channel—twenty to thirty feet below the ancient river bed—to the Dead Sea. It fertilizes no land beyond its immediate banks, which are covered with rank masses of vegetation, that for miles hide its course. Apart from a slight fringe of reeds and canes, the turbid, rapid river flows through a valley devoid of beauty or life, under a temperature of excessive heat. In March and April it overflows its banks, and in the vicinity of Jericho is nearly a mile wide, but its natural width rarely exceeds a hundred feet. Its depth varies from three to twelve feet. Only twice between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea does the valley widen beyond four miles; at Bethshan it reaches seven miles, and at Jericho it gradually increases to fourteen.

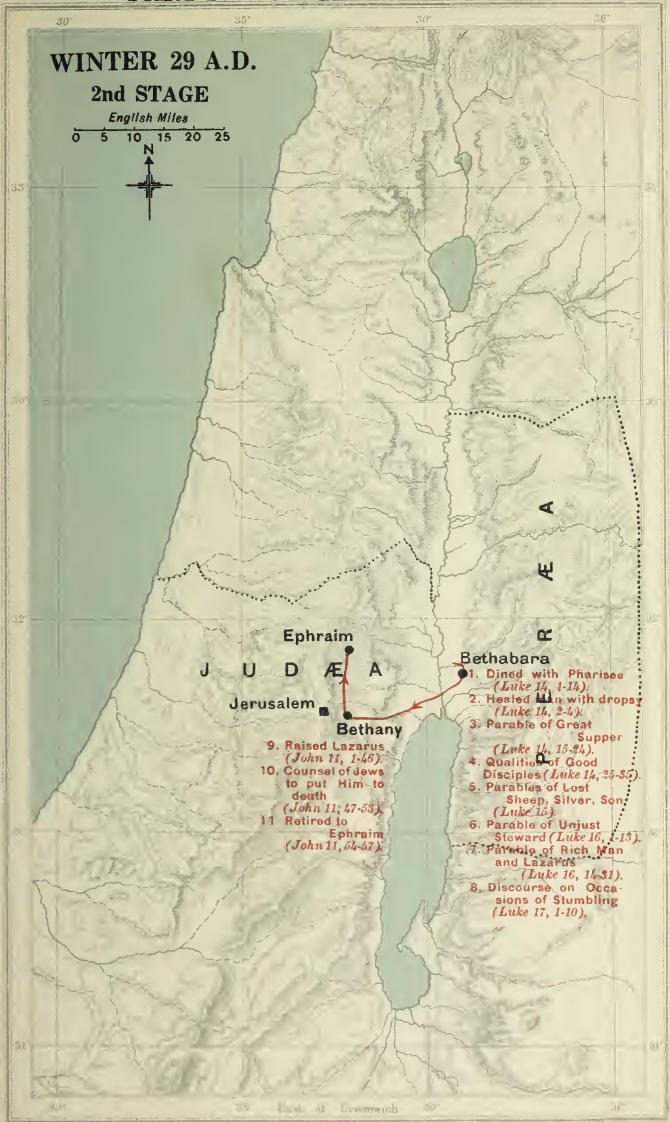
JERICHO

An important city, pleasantly situated amongst groves of palm trees, on a ridge overlooking the Jordan valley. It was a noted stronghold, and commanded the approach to Jerusalem. From this point the road westward ascends the white limestone hills of Judæa, and it is difficult to imagine a climb, more heavy and dreary, than that to the Holy City.

EPHRAIM

A frontier city built on a hill at the edge of the plateau of Benjamin, and near to the wilderness.





WINTER 29 A.D.

2nd STAGE



Ephraim
 J U D Æ A
 Jerusalem
 Bethany

- Bethabara
1. Dined with Pharisee (Luke 14, 1-14).
 2. Healed man with dropsy (Luke 14, 2-4).
 3. Parable of Great Supper (Luke 14, 15-24).
 4. Qualities of Good Disciples (Luke 14, 25-35).
 5. Parables of Lost Sheep, Silver, Son (Luke 15).
 6. Parable of Unjust Steward (Luke 16, 1-15).
 7. Parable of Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16, 14-31).
 8. Discourse on Occasions of Stumbling (Luke 17, 1-10).

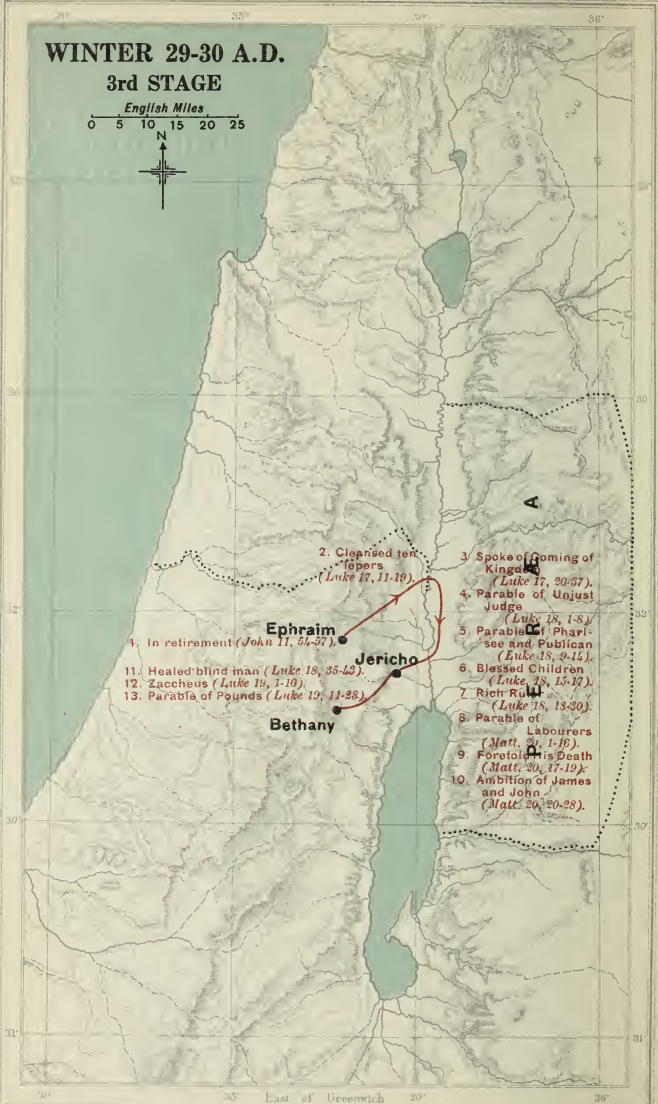
9. Raised Lazarus (John 11, 1-46).
10. Counsel of Jews to put Him to death (John 11, 47-53).
11. Retired to Ephraim (John 11, 54-57).

WINTER 29-30 A.D.

3rd STAGE

English Miles

0 5 10 15 20 25



PART V.

Death and Resurrection.

30 A.D.

BETHANY

The name applied not only to the village, but to the whole of the south-east slope of Olivet. The village lies about two miles from Jerusalem, almost at the foot of the mount, hidden amongst groves of olive, fig and almond trees, at the very edge of the desert hills, that reach without sign of human habitation to Jericho.

OLIVET

The central eminence of a ridge of three rounded summits, directly opposite the temple area. There is little evidence to-day of the trees from which it originally derived its name, but its green slopes remain the most pleasing feature in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. From the summit of the mount the Holy City lies below spread out map-like, and every object of the plateau can be clearly distinguished. The heights of Hebron can be seen in the south, and eastward is a panoramic view of the Jordan valley and the Dead Sea.

Over Olivet run three pathways from Bethany to Jerusalem. One winds over the northern ridge; another climbs the steep ascent over the summit; the third passes over the southern shoulder. This last is a continuation of the main road from Jericho, and is doubtless the one that was taken by our Lord. It is nothing more than a rough, broad, mountain track.

GETHSEMANE

At the base of Olivet, and mid-way down the grey, stony valley of the Kedron, is the traditional site of the Garden of Gethsemane; an enclosure of great gnarled and twisted olive trees, covering about an acre of ground.

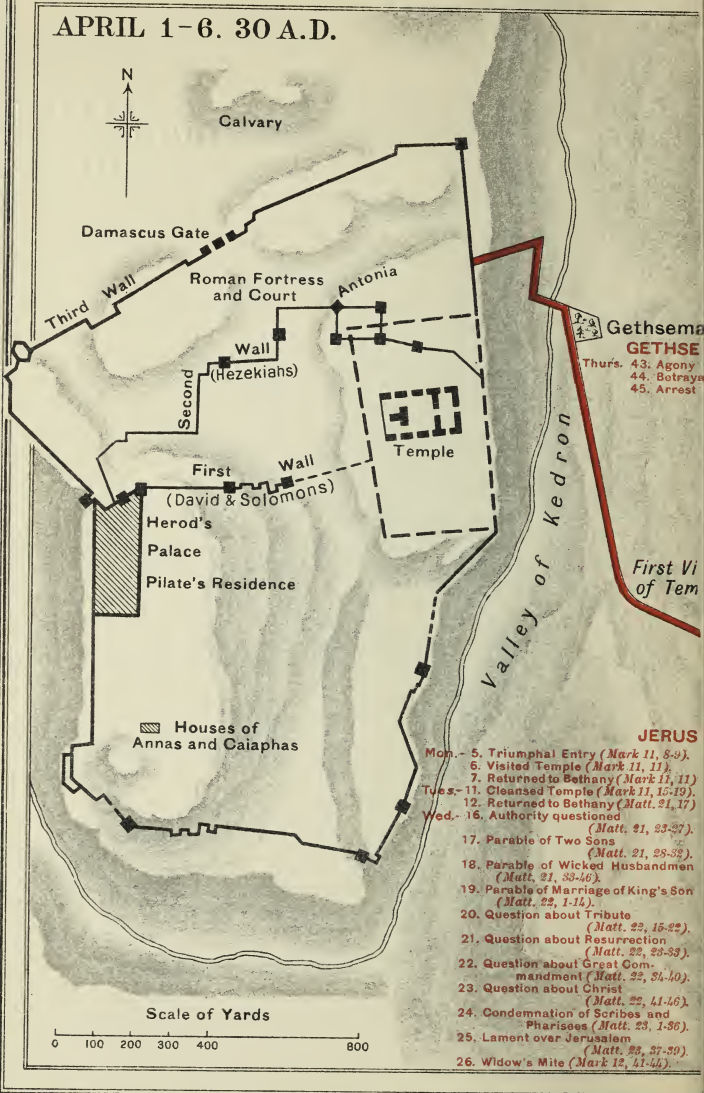
CALVARY

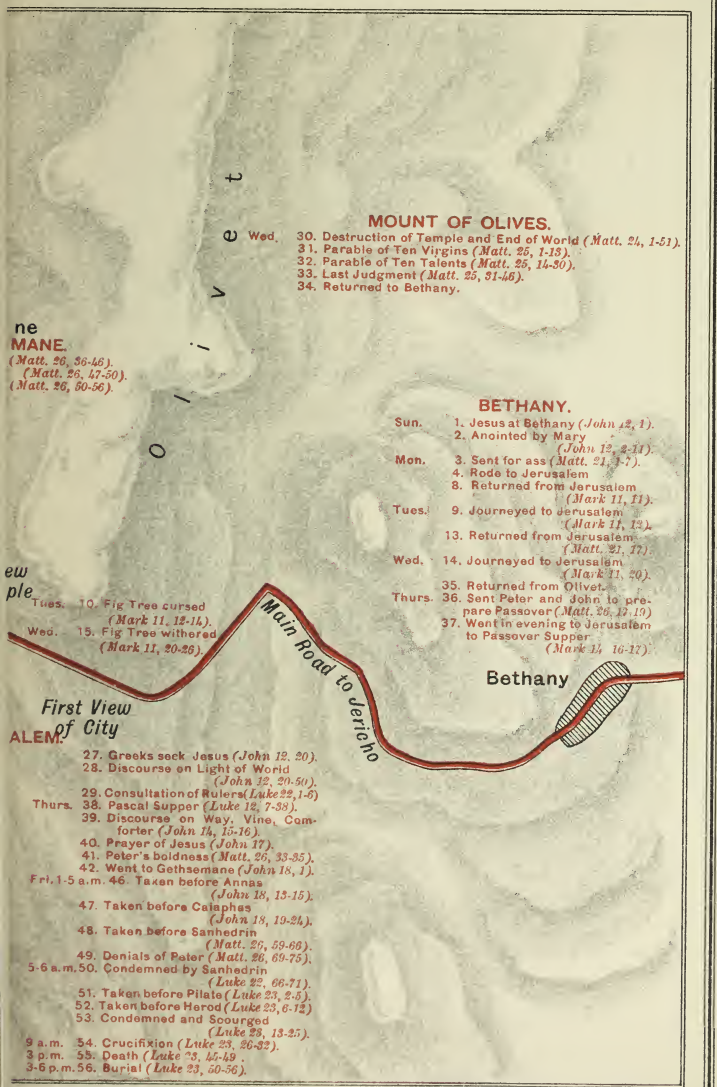
The most probable site of the crucifixion is the skull-shaped elevation on the north of the city, outside the Damascus Gate. It is a knoll of ground which commands a view of the entire city.

JERUSALEM

The most imposing feature inside the sacred walls is the Temple area, which covers thirty-five acres, and claims the finest situation in the east of the city. It is a pile of magnificent marble buildings, modelled on the plan of a tent, and enclosed by immense walls. On the opposite side of the city, and separated from the Temple by a deep gorge, is the Palace of Herod, which was the headquarters of the Roman governors. The Praetorium was situated either at Antonia, the northern fortress of the Temple, or in the open court before the gates of the Palace, where a mosaic pavement marked the seat of judgment. Jerusalem had no streets, but narrow, winding alleys, and unpaved lanes, where the business of the different trades was conducted. Its houses were flat and built in groups, each group holding a different family, tribe or profession. At night the place was dark and silent.

APRIL 1-6. 30 A.D.





Jerusalem
 Olivet
 Bethany
 Jericho

ne MANE.
 (Matt. 26, 36-46).
 (Matt. 26, 47-50).
 (Matt. 26, 60-66).

Tues. 10. Fig Tree cursed (Mark 11, 12-14).
 Wed. 15. Fig Tree withered (Mark 11, 20-26).

First View of City
Jerusalem.

- 27. Greeks seek Jesus (John 12, 20).
- 28. Discourse on Light of World (John 12, 20-50).
- 29. Consultation of Rulers (Luke 22, 1-6).
- Thurs. 38. Pascal Supper (Luke 12, 7-33).
- 39. Discourse on Way, Vine, Comforter (John 14, 15-16).
- 40. Prayer of Jesus (John 17).
- 41. Peter's boldness (Matt. 26, 33-35).
- 42. Went to Gethsemane (John 18, 1).
- Fri. 1-5 a.m. 46. Taken before Annas (John 18, 13-15).
- 47. Taken before Calaphas (John 18, 19-24).
- 48. Taken before Sanhedrin (Matt. 26, 59-66).
- 49. Denials of Peter (Matt. 26, 69-75).
- 5-6 a.m. 50. Condemned by Sanhedrin (Luke 22, 66-71).
- 51. Taken before Pilate (Luke 23, 2-5).
- 52. Taken before Herod (Luke 23, 6-12).
- 53. Condemned and Scourged (Luke 23, 13-25).
- 9 a.m. 54. Crucifixion (Luke 23, 26-32).
- 3 p.m. 55. Death (Luke 23, 44-49).
- 3-6 p.m. 56. Burial (Luke 23, 50-56).

MOUNT OF OLIVES.

- Wed. 30. Destruction of Temple and End of World (Matt. 24, 1-51).
- 31. Parable of Ten Virgins (Matt. 25, 1-13).
- 32. Parable of Ten Talents (Matt. 25, 14-30).
- 33. Last Judgment (Matt. 25, 31-46).
- 34. Returned to Bethany.

BETHANY.

- Sun. 1. Jesus at Bethany (John 12, 1).
- 2. Anointed by Mary (John 12, 2-11).
- Mon. 3. Sent for ass (Matt. 21, 3-7).
- 4. Rode to Jerusalem.
- 8. Returned from Jerusalem (Mark 11, 11).
- Tues. 9. Journeyed to Jerusalem (Mark 11, 12).
- 13. Returned from Jerusalem (Matt. 21, 17).
- Wed. 14. Journeyed to Jerusalem (Mark 11, 20).
- 35. Returned from Olivet.
- Thurs. 36. Sent Peter and John to prepare Passover (Matt. 26, 13, 19).
- 37. Went in evening to Jerusalem to Passover Supper (Mark 14, 16-17).

Bethany

Main Road to Jericho

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GALILEE

SAMARIA

JUDAEA

Emmaus ●
Jerusalem ■

Bethany ●

11 - Ascension
(Luke 24, 50-55)

- 1. Appeared to Mary (John 20, 1-18).
- 2. To women (Matt. 28, 9-10).
- 4. To Peter (Luke 24, 34).
- 5. To Apostles except Thomas (John 20, 19-23).
- 6. To Apostles with Thomas (John 20, 24-29).
- 10. To all Apostles (Acts 1, 1-8).

- 8. To Multitude in Galilee (Matt. 28, 16-20).
- 9. To James in Galilee (1 Cor. 15, 7).

7. To seven disciples by the Lake (John 21, 1-23).

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